(b) There is no proposal at present before the Government to bring about any change in the present system of appointment of Judges in the Supreme Court and the High Courts.

Cases pending in Punjab and Haryana High Court

1769. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases pending in the Punjab and Haryana High Court as on 1st January, 2008;

(b) the number out of them pending for more than ten years and those pending for less than ten years but more than five years and the date since when the oldest case in the court is pending; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to expedite disposal of long pending cases particularly those pending for over ten years?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) As per the latest available information, there are 2,55,696 cases pending in the Punjab and Haryana High Court as on 30th September, 2007.

(b) As reported by the High Court of Punjab and Haryana, there were 2,65,072 cases pending as on 30.6.2007 out of which 68,114 cases were pending for more than 10 years and 66,473 cases for less than 10 years but more than 5 years. No information has been provided by the High Court about the oldest pending case.

(c) Government has taken several steps including deciding to increase the strength of Judges in the High Courts. Government is implementing a scheme for computerization of District and Subordinate Courts which includes upgradation of the Information and Communication Technology infrastructure of the High Courts.

Alternative modes of disposal including meditation, negotiation and arbitration have been encouraged. With a view to ensuring expeditious disposal of cases, the Civil Procedure Code has been amended, *inter alia*, limiting the number of adjournments that can be given to a party. Classification and Grouping of cases involving common question of law is also done in the High Courts for speedy disposal of pending cases.

Registration of Marriages

1770. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has implemented the Supreme Court's directive on compulsory registration of marriages in the country, issued on 25th October, 2007, giving a time-frame of three months;

(b) if so, whether the provisions of this directive has been extended to all the communities or being exercised by different States selectivity; and

(c) whether the personal laws of particular communities are at variance with this directive?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) The Supreme Court *vide* its judgment dated 25.10.2007 in the case of Smt. Seema *Vs.* Ashwani Kumar has directed the States and Union Territories who have not acted in line with the directions given on 14.02.2006 shall forthwith do it and in no case later than three months from 25.10.2007. The Central Government has sought the comments of the State Governments/Union territories as regard the compliance of the direction of the Supreme Court.

(b) and (c) The information is being collected from the State Governments and Union Territories.

Suggestions and recommendations by Supreme Court and High Courts

†1771. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received suggestions and recommendations on different issues from High Courts and Supreme Court during the last three years, till date;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action Government has taken or is going to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Suitable action is taken from time-to-time.

Setting up of Environment Courts

1772. SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that environment related court disputes are on the rise in the country; and

(b) if so, whether Government is planning to set up specialised Environment Courts in various parts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (b) The Law Commission of India, in its 186th Report had *inter-alia* recommended setting up of environmental courts in each State, consisting of judicial and scientific experts in the field of environment of dealing with environmental disputes besides having appellate jurisdiction in respect of appeals under various Pollution Control Laws. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has, in principle, accepted the recommendations of the Law Commission with certain modifications. It proposes to set up a National Environment Tribunal and some Regional Environment Tribunal for groups of State for effective and expeditious disposal of civil cases relating to environment.

Memorandum by States on Mineral Policy

1773. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chief Ministers of five mineral-based States have met the Prime Minister and submitted a memorandum, asking for a favourable mineral policy;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.